A Cognitive Interpretation of Discourse Deixis

Youwen Yang
Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing, China; Wenzhou University, Zhejiang, China
Email: youwiny@gmail.com

Abstract—This paper aims at proposing a cognitive structure for discourse deixis, in terms of which deixis is understood and used to structure reality, so that reality is internally experienced and hence reproduced or changed. The paper also tries to argue that discourse deixis is metaphorically derived from place deixis. This analysis is consistent with and confirms the spatialization-of-form hypothesis, which requires a metaphorical mapping from physical space onto a conceptual space. To be specific, discourse deixis is based on the metaphorical understanding of discourse as time and time as space.

Index Terms—cognitive, interpretation, discourse deixis

I. DEIXIS IN DISCOURSE

Deixis in its traditional linguistic sense refers to the fact that certain linguistic forms have direct pragmatic interpretation depending on parameters of the speech situation, rather than a stable semantic value. Specifically, their interpretation is contextually anchored to the identity of the speaker and addressee, their locations, and the time of the utterance. When A asks B on the phone, “Will you come here?” the linguistic expressions “you”, “here”(and even “come”) and “will” are interpreted as the “addressee”, “location of the speaker”, and “after time of the utterance”, respectively.


Lyons has a detailed study of deixis in his Semantics published in 1977, mainly discussing person, space and time deixis. Lyons’ definition of deixis (see Lyons, 1977) is considered to be the most authoritative up to now. He also points out the phenomenon of deictic projection, a derivative use of deixis, but he makes no elaborate description of it.

Fillmore’s view is similar to Lyons’, claiming that the interpretation of deixis makes reference to a canonical context, i.e. the speaker-centered context. He focuses on the study of space, time, social and discourse deixis and puts forward that deixis may have both deictic and non-deictic usages.

Levinson summarizes both philosophical and descriptive approaches to deixis in his Pragmatics published in 1983. He points out part of the philosophical interest in deixis arises from the questions of whether 1) all indexical expressions can be reduced to a single primary one, and 2) whether this final pragmatic residue can be translated out into some eternal context-free artificial language. But no matter how hard the philosophers try to achieve it, they find it unavoidable to introduce context in explaining deixis. He also elaborates on the two newly developed categories of deixis, discourse and social deixis, after focusing on person, space and time deixis, and generalizes the egocentricity of deixis.

Besides these three distinguish scholars, others have also made some detailed studies on deixis, but no single and comprehensive theory of deixis has ever been proposed, and linguists have generally tended to describe deixis according to their function and contextual parameters they define. Consequently, there are always some problems needing to be further clarified. Firstly, traditional accounts of deixis distinguish between deictic and non-deictic terms and usages of these terms on the basis of rigid criteria for membership in the deictic category, which obscure our understanding of deixis itself. Secondly, an essential characteristic of all categories of deixis appears to be their egocentricity and the speaker generally constitutes the deictic center of the speech event, but there are various exceptions to this, in which deictic expressions are used in ways that shift this deictic center to other participants, or indeed to protagonists in narratives. Traditional accounts of deixis cannot provide a convincing explanation for this phenomenon of deictic projection. Thirdly, some particular expressions (as “this”, “that”) are used to express place, time, and discourse deixis in different contexts. There must be some conceptual and social relatedness at least among the three basic deictic categories, and it remains unexplored.

With the development of cognitive linguistics in recent years, it seems possible to propose an experiential framework for the analysis of deixis. In contrast to other philosophical views that have affected linguistics, experiential realism views language as part of general cognition. This view is adopted in cognitive linguistics, which aims to explain how language is systematically grounded in human cognition. One of the basic principles of experiential realism and cognitive linguistics is that language is not a representation of objectively existing reality, but of reality as it is perceived and experienced by human beings.

II. DISCOURSE DEIXIS
Discourse (or text) deixis is deictic reference to a portion of a discourse or discourse representative relative to the speaker’s “current” “location” in the discourse. Therefore, discourse deixis is deixis in text. Discourse deixis has to do with the choice of lexical or grammatical elements which indicate or otherwise refer to some portion or aspect of the ongoing discourse—something like, for example, “the former”. Most commonly, the terms of discourse deixis are taken from systems of deictic and non-deictic time semantics, for the very good reason that any point in a discourse can be thought of as a point in time—the time at which that portion of the discourse is encoded or decoded—with preceding portions of the discourse conceived as occurring earlier in time, later portions thought of as occurring later in time. Expressions in discourse deixis taken directly from non-deictic time semantics are words like “earlier” and “later”, and phrases like “the preceding X” and “the following X”. So, a text, whether in its written or oral realization, is closely related to the concepts of space and time. Since discourse unfolds in time, it seems natural that time-deictic or space-deictic words can be used to refer to portions of the discourse as in the following examples:

1. I bet you haven’t heard this joke.
2. That was the funniest story I’ve ever heard.
3. There’s a nice point to discuss in class.
4. Here’s a powerful argument.

An interesting point about the use of spatial deictic terms to express discourse deixis is that the proximal-distal distinction in space deixis acquires temporal status in relation to the unfolding of the text. Thus this can be used to refer to a forthcoming portion of the discourse, as in (1), and that to a preceding portion, as in (2). Moreover, the use of here and there to express discourse deixis is also tied to the temporal dimension of discourse. In (3) this comment is typically made in reference to a point already made, whereas the argument is about to follow the statement made in (4), which in fact serves to introduce the argument itself.

### III. A COGNITIVE INTERPRETATION OF DEIXIS

**A. The ICM of Deixis**

An important principle of experiential realism is that human knowledge is organized in terms of idealized cognitive models (ICMs). These are complex conceptual structures, gestalts, any element of which can correspond to a conceptual category. Concepts, then, are characterized relative to ICMs. When linguistic elements are associated with conceptual elements in ICMs, the result is a symbolic ICM. Thus, the meaning of a lexical item is represented as an element in an ICM.

In his discussion of *there-constructions*, Lakoff (1987) describes the experiential gestalt (the ICM) of the central deictic there-constructions in locational terms as follows: It is assumed as a background that some entity exists and is present at some location in the speaker’s visual field, that the speaker is directing his attention to it, and that the hearer is interested in its whereabouts but does not have his attention focused on it…The speaker then directs the hearer’s attention to the location of the entity (perhaps accompanied by a pointing gesture) and brings it to the hearer’s attention that this entity is at the specified location. Additionally…if the entity is moving, the motion may be indicated. And the speaker may choose to describe the entity or its location. (Lakoff 1987, p.490)

Lakoff calls the above the pointing-out ICM of *there-constructions*, and convincingly argues that it gives rise to the prototypical structure of this category and motivates its various uses. It is clear from the above that this description of deixis is based on the following inferences: firstly, there should be an existential presupposition of an entity in space; secondly, the speaker intends to direct the hearer’s attention to the entity, and thirdly, the speaker’s intention is fulfilled by the use of the particular construction. It is reasonable to assume that whatever definition is proposed for the deictic ICM, it should include the three essential aspects of the ICM of there-constructions.

Fillmore (1982) once described the participating role of interactants in the communicative situation, that is, their interchanging roles as speakers and addressees, their location in space and utterance time. So, participants can also be viewed as specific entities in space, whereas their utterances are temporally defined.

In fact, every utterance token is spatio-temporally unique, being spoken or written at a particular place and at a particular time. We can specify the actual spatio-temporal situation of any utterance-act by giving its spatio-temporal co-ordinates. The spatio-temporal co-ordinates are, however, only one part of the actual situation of utterance. Other components can also be described. For example, each of the participants must know his role and status. Linguistically, relevant roles are of two kinds: deictic and social. Deictic roles derive from the fact that in normal language behavior the speaker addresses his utterance to another person (or other persons) who is present in the situation and may refer to himself, to the addressee(s) or to the other persons and objects (whether they are in a situation or not), not by means of name or description, but by means of a personal or demonstrative pronoun, whose reference is determined by the participation of the referent in the language event, at the time of the utterance. Deictic roles are grammaticalized in many languages in what is traditionally called the category of person. Social roles are culture-specific functions, established in a society and recognized by its members, for example, the function of being a parent, a teacher or a priest.

Apparently, deictic categories reveal our conceptualization of human beings as objects in space and of human language as an object in time. The center of this conceptualization, on which the deixis is based, is the human being, or in communication terms, the speaker. To be specific, the spatial dimension of deixis should be of central importance.
Besides, time is represented as the fourth dimension of space, along which discourse unfolds. Moreover, a fifth dimension emerges, that of social rank, which is also implicitly defined in terms of space. Significantly, the deictic center moves while communicative interaction is in progress. The following Figure will clearly illustrate the time and social dimensions of a deictic expression in space.

Hence, we can propose that the ICM of deixis involves an authorized speaker, an unfocused addressee, and a linguistic act of pointing to an entity in space by the speaker. Accordingly, a deictic expression is one that builds a mental space in which the speaker and the addressee are co-present at a given point in time. In short, a mental space evoked by a deictic expression involves the conceptualization of the deictic center. It is clear from the above definition that the cognitive gestalt of deixis is based on linguistic representation of a physical act performed by a human being in the presence of another human being.

B. Mental Space

An ICM structures a mental space. Mental spaces are “constructs distinct from linguistic structures but built up in any discourse according to guidelines provided by the linguistic expressions” (Fauconnier, 1985, p.16). They concern the understanding of any fixed or ongoing states of affairs such as immediate reality, fictional or hypothetical situations, past or future situations, representations of situations as in pictures and photos, or abstract domains such as subject matters (economics, politics, linguistics, etc.). Linguistic expressions functioning as space-builders include prepositional phrases, such as “in the play”, adverbs (“really”, “probably”), connectives (“if…then”, “either…or”), and clauses of prepositional attitude (Mary hopes..., believes..., claims..., etc.). Mental spaces are represented as sets of elements with relations holding between them. Elements in a space may have counterparts in another space. An element in one space may trigger another element, the target, in another space on the basis of a pragmatic function holding between the two elements. For example, one pragmatic function links authors with their works. Thus, reference to the author may trigger reference to his works, and the connector between the two is the above pragmatic function. It is suggested that “connectors are part of ICMs, which are set up locally, culturally, or on general experiential or psychological grounds” (Fauconnier, 1985, p.10).

The mental space which is structured by the deictic ICM relates to the linguistic expressions that express it. This mental space is domain that builds up as we talk. For example, the drama ICM introduces and structures the mental space of a play. In other words, because we understand the drama as a make-up piece of literary discourse, we can also understand that a murder in a play will not actually cause the physical death of the actor.

Going back to the deictic ICM, we suggest that it introduces and structures a mental space, which is built in discourse by the use of specific linguistic expressions. For example, in using the adverbial “now”, a mental space is built in the discourse which is structured by the deictic ICM, so that within this space the speaker and addressee is assumed to appear at coding time. Similarly, the expression “this house” builds a mental space whereby, the co-presence of speaker and addressee is assumed within a particular location that is specified as the speaker’s location at coding time. In both of these examples, the mental spaces which are built by the corresponding linguistic expressions are structured by all aspects of the deictic ICM. That is, the speaker, who is authorized by his own utterance, points to an existing and at least temporally and locationally definite entity in relation to himself, to direct the unfocused addressee’s attention to it.

With regard to place deixis, it has been observed that the expressions “here” and “there” prototypically encode the relationship between the speaker and a location in which an entity is found. In this case, since the speaker is also understood as an entity in space, the use of these expressions builds a mental space in which both entities, the speaker
and the object, exist in the physical space.

“There” is primarily and prototypically deictic in that it builds a mental space structured by the deictic ICM. However, when its referent is not specified within this deictic mental space, a non-deictically structured mental space is also built. In this case, it is the anaphoric usage. Apparently, if a particular location is not identified in terms of the speaker or the addressee, it is identified independently in terms of other locative expressions. For example,

(5) We’re there.

Fillmore (1971) has observed that “there” in this example refers to the place we previously mentioned as our goal, whereas Lyons (1977) has claimed that this odd use of “there” can be explained in terms of the situational salience of this referent. Both Fillmore and Lyons are right in making these observations, which, however, do not explain this phenomenon in themselves. Why does the speaker use “there” instead of “here” to refer to the location where the speaker is at utterance time? Fauconnier’s (1997) blending theory may offer a convincing explanation. It seems that in this sentence ‘there’ builds a blended space. Blended space inherits structural elements from another two mental spaces, thereby making it possible to inferentially understand the expressions that seem to appear odd. Consider a classical example:

(6) If Churchill had been Prime Minister in 1938 instead of Nevill Chamberlain, Hitler would have been deposed and World War II averted.

This example asks us to blend conceptual structure from different mental spaces to create a separate mental space. The input spaces include (a) Churchill in 1983 as outspoken opponent of Germany and (b) Neville Chamberlain in 1938 as prime minister facing the threat from Germany. To construct the blend, we project parts of each of these spaces to it, and develop an emergent structure there.

From mental space (a), the blend takes Churchill. From mental space (b), the blend takes the role prime minister. In the blend, Churchill is Prime minister by 1938. The blend is contrary-to-fact with respect to both of its input spaces. The antecedent and the consequent exist in the blended space; neither exists in either of the input spaces.

Now, let’s come to two examples about the deictic projections.

(7) Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure…. We have come to dedicate a portion of the field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. (A. Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address)

In example (7), “those” refers to the national heroes in American history, which is a conventional deictic usage, because something that took place in the past, is typically treated as distant from the speaker’s current situation, so the distal demonstrative pronoun “there” is used here. But, Abraham Lincoln made a speech in Gettysburg, which was a city of America. Why did he address America “that nation”? Furthermore, the motion verb “come” usually means “moving towards the speaker’s location at CT”, that is to say, we should “come here” instead of “come there”. Generally speaking, “that nation” should be corresponding to the adverb “there”. Traditional theory of deixis cannot give a clear explanation for this phenomenon. From the cognitive linguistic perspective, the space builder “four score and seven years ago” structures a mental space, which includes two elements “our fathers” and “a nation cherished liberty”; then the other space builder “now” structures a new mental space. As far as the new mental space is concerned, the two elements “our fathers” and “a nation cherished liberty” are outside the space, they are distal, so the deictic expressions “those” and “that” are used here.
C. Deictic Prototype Effects

Basically, there are two ways to understand the notion of prototype. It can be deduced from categorization experiments. For instance, some members of a category first come to mind in association experiments and are recognized more rapidly as category members in verification tasks. If one takes these members as prototypes of the respective categories, this leads to definitions like “best example of a category”, “salient example”, “clearest cases of category membership”, “more representative of things in a class” or “central and typical examples”.

But in cognitive linguistics the prototype is taken as a mental representation, as some sort of cognitive reference point. This definition may range from the more concrete notion of “image” or “schema” to the more abstract “representation of a category” or “ideal” according to the categories to which they are applied (see Lakoff, 1986).

Unlike the homogeneous categories postulated by the logical hypothesis, cognitive prototype categories always consist of good and bad members and include marginal examples whose category membership is doubtful. Prototypical (or good) members of cognitive categories have the largest number of attributes in common with other members of the category and the smallest number of attributes which also occur with members of neighboring categories. Bad examples (or marginal category members) share only a small number of attributes with other members of the category, but have several attributes which belong to other categories as well. So, the category boundaries are fuzzy.

As far as deixis is concerned, traditional approaches to this phenomenon set a sharp boundary between deictic terms and deictic uses of terms. But deixis is sometimes clearly and strongly expressed, and sometimes weakly expressed. That suggests that deixis is not an absolute category but a graded one. Lakoff (1987) observes that if the ICM of a category fits a particular instance of this category perfectly, then this is a prototypical member, and if the ICM fits less well, then the member is less prototypical, and if not at all, then the entity is not a member of this category. Given a candidate member of the deictic category, if a situation fits perfectly the deictic ICM in terms of which the category is characterized, then the member is prototypical. If the situation fits less well, the member is less prototypical, and so on. In what follows we attempt to illustrate the prototype effects of deixis in terms of deictic ICM in person deixis.

Apparentlly, person deixis operates on a basic three-part division, exemplified by the pronouns for first person (“I”), second person (“you”), third person (“he”, “she”, or “it”) and their plural forms. By definition, deixis depends directly on extra-linguistic context for establishing referents. “I” is used by the speaker to point to himself in the presence of the addressee, so it is prototypical person deixis. Similarly, the personal pronoun “we” is used to encode the roles of speaker and possibly the addressee as entities in space. By using this term, the speaker identifies himself not as a single entity but rather as a member of group. If the group contains the speaker and the specific addressee, then the use of “we” or “Za Men(an another form of “we” in Chinese)” is prototypical. For examples:

(8) We are brothers. (Wo men shi xiong di.)
(9) Let’s go for a dinner. (Za men chi fan qu.)

If the addressee(s) or even the speaker is excluded from reference, then the use of “we” is less prototypical. When a general manager says to the villagers in a poor mountainous area.

(10) “We are going to finance here to build a primary school of hope.” (“Wo men yao zai zhe’er juan zi jian li yi suo xi wang xiao xue.”.)
In this utterance, the addressees are excluded from reference, but some specific group is intended and conceived of as a set of entities in a mental space containing them. “We” in this example has a representative function, and so the space is created in terms of the speaker and those she represents.

Along the same lines, it is possible to analyze examples of the so-called editorial “we”, or academic “we”, as in the following examples:

(11) We (=I) have been observing the phenomenon for years, but at this stage we are (=I am) still unable to be very specific about its nature of its cause.

The use of personal pronoun can also be considered marginally deictic in that the pragmatics of the discourse and academic writing violates the presupposition of the existence of a group of people containing the speaker as member. Moreover, “We” in example (11) is an entity in discourse space. Apparently, if physical space is the prototypical space for deixis, discourse space is less prototypical and the entity in non-prototypical space is itself non-prototypical. Therefore, in this case, the deictic ICM only partly structures the mental space built by the personal pronoun, which is less prototypically deictic.

The second person pronoun “you” is used by the speaker to refer to the addressee(s). In this case, it is a prototypical deictic usage. However, it is also noticed that “you” may take a more general reading, whereby the addressee is not precisely specified as in the following examples:

(12) You never know what you can do till you try.

“You” in the above example presents varying degrees of specificity of the entities. Though “you” does refer to an addressee, the addressee does not carry the presupposition of definiteness. Hence this use is marginally deictic.

In general, third person reference is not regarded as deictic in that the entity referred to is not identified in terms of the speaker pointing to it. For example,

(13) Pam went home because she felt sick.

(14) The monkey took the banana and ate it.

The pronoun “she” and “it” in the examples do not belong to the deictic category. Because they do not make reference to an entity relative to the speaker, but refer back to the referent picked out by “Pam” and “the banana” in the preceding clause, hence it is an anaphoric usage of the pronoun. From the examples, we may conclude that deixis and anaphoricity are prototypically incompatible phenomena.

So far person deixis has been analyzed in terms of deictics as a category structured around an ICM and the deictic ICM gives rise to prototypical effects. From the analysis we may draw the following conclusions:

Firstly, like the other prototypical categories, deixis exhibits degree of typicality; not every member is equally representative for the category. In the deictic category, there are prototypically deictic usages, less prototypically deictic usages and marginally deictic usages. The deictic ICM can clearly show the prototype effect of deictic expressions.

Secondly, deictic category is blurred at the edge. Anaphoric identification of an entity very poorly fits the deictic ICM.

D. The Foundation of Physical Space for Deictic Categories

The hypothesis that spatial expressions are more basic, grammatically and semantically, than various kinds of non-spatial expressions has been termed localism, and has been ordinarily supported by cognitive psychologists (Miller and Johnson-Laird, 1976). Spatial expressions are linguistically more basic, according to the localists, in that they serve as basis for other related expressions, and the reason why this should be so, is that spatial organization is of central importance in human cognition. More specifically, it has been systematically observed that temporal expressions, in many unrelated languages, are patently derived from locative expressions. For example, as Traugott (1975) has argued, nearly every preposition or particle that is locative in English is also temporal, while the prepositions “for”, “since” and “till”, which are temporal rather than spatial in modern English, derive historically from locatives. What is true of prepositions and particles is true also of very many verbs, adverbs, adjectives and conjunctions, not only in English, but also in several other languages. Localism treats verb tense and aspect as instances of a kind of spatialization. Tense expresses time deixis, and there is an obvious parallelism between time deixis and place deixis. As “here” and “there” can be analyzed as meaning “at this place” and “at that place”, respectively, so “now” and “then” can be analyzed as meaning “at this time” and “at that time”. Moreover, there is an interdependence of time and distance, given that, in human experience, to cover a long distance requires more time.

Aspectual distinctions are even more obviously spatial than tense distinctions. As a point is contained within a line, so an event can be located within the duration of a state or process, as the following examples illustrate:

(15) Our first child was born (at a time) when we were very hard up.

(16) He was run over (at a time) when he was crossing the road.

On the localism hypothesis, these structures give rise to corresponding structures in other, non-spatial domains, by means of analogy or metaphor, as in (17) and (18) below:

(17) John is in a state of blissful ignorance;

(18) John is in the process of cleaning his teeth.

In (17) a state is viewed as a spatial domain, whereas in (18) a process is similarly understood.

IV. SPATIAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DISCOURSE DEIXIS
Discourse may be understood in terms of the PART-WHOLE schema. It structures the metaphorical mapping of place onto discourse. This image schema arises from bodily experience, in that we experience our bodies as wholes with parts. Lakoff (1978) claims that the PART-WHOLE schema is asymmetric in that if A is part of B, B cannot be part of A. Moreover, the whole exists only if all the parts exist in the configuration. If the whole is at place P, then all the parts are there, too. A typical property of the schema is that the parts may be contiguous to one another. In these terms, discourse is understood as spatial entity, which is the whole consisting of contiguous parts. The part of the discourse at which the speaker stands is the deictic, discourse center. The parts are also organized according to the LINEAR ORDER schema which motivates their contiguity. Significantly, the speaker may move towards a part of the discourse, or the part may move in relation to him. For examples:

(19) I shall now move to the next point.
(20) In the following paragraph, we’ll talk about long-term memory.

In (19) the speaker is moving from one part of the whole to the next. In (20), it refers to the part which is moving after the speaker and the speaker’s present discoursal location.

On either directionality of motion, when the part and the speaker meet at the same location, this location is the deictic center. This deictic center contains all of the elements of the here and now, or the phenomenon present for the user of the deictic terms. For example, in fictional narrative, readers and authors shift their deictic center from the real-world situation to an image of themselves at a location within the story world. This location is represented as a cognitive structure often containing the elements of a particular time and place within the fictional world, or even within the subjective space of a fictional character. If a deictic center has been established, the reader can correctly localize those story aspects where they belong. The deictic center does not remain static within the story, but shifts as the story unfolds. The story tends to be constructed locally. Although there are many temporal and spatial shifts in the presentation of a text, the reader tends to witness most events as they seem to happen. The events tend to occur within the mental model at the active space-time location to which the reader has been directed by the syntax and semantics of the text. Once the existents and events of the story world are created by the text, they exist in relation to one another. Deictic terms, proper names, pronouns, definite descriptions, and other referring expressions almost invariably refer to these existents and events.

The understanding of discourse as motion in space in this double sense, as well as the linearity of motion, is probably responsible also for conceiving of discourse as a temporal flow of entity. The expression “unfolding the discourse in time” is characteristic of this complex way of conceptualizing discourse. Also, expressions such as “the beginning of this paragraph” or “the end of this paragraph” seem to point to a temporal understanding of discourse.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper aims at proposing a cognitive structure for discourse deixis, in terms of which deixis is understood and used to structure reality, so that reality is internally experienced and hence reproduced or changed. The approach to deixis adopted in the paper originates in cognitive semantics and comprises cognitive models, image schematic and metaphorical structures as in Lakoff (1987) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999), mental spaces as in Fauconnier (1985, 1997), and prototype structure as in Rosch (1978) and Taylor (1995).

It proposes that deixis constitutes a pragmatic category which is structured around a deictic ICM. In the analysis, the deictic category exhibits prototype effects along a scale of prototypicality where the various deictic usages are distributed. Furthermore, it claims that mental space which is built by the use of specific deictic terms can offer some reasonable explanations for the phenomenon of deictic projection. The paper also tries to argue that discourse deixis is metaphorically derived from place deixis. This analysis is consistent with and confirms the spatialization-of-form hypothesis, which requires a metaphorical mapping from physical space onto a conceptual space. To be specific, discourse deixis is based on the metaphorical understanding of discourse as time and space.

REFERENCES


Youwen Yang was born in Huanggang, Hubei Province, China in 1967. He received his M.A. degree in linguistics from Hubei University, China in 2002. He is currently a Ph.D candidate in Beijing Foreign Studies University and an associate professor in the School of Foreign Languages, Wenzhou University, Zhejiang, China. His research interests include Linguistics & Applied Linguistics, Semantics, Contrastive Linguistics, and etc.